



U.S. Department of Justice

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For Immediate Release:

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July 12, 2007

EVENT: Sentencing

Defendant: Metro Technical Institute, Inc.

**TECHNICAL SCHOOL'S CO-OWNER,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
SENTENCED IN DETROIT ON CHARGES OF FINANCIAL AID FRAUD**

Two men, residents of Oak Park and Detroit, Michigan, and a third from Columbus, Ohio, were sentenced on July 11 and 12, 2007, on charges of student financial aid fraud stemming from their involvement in a scheme perpetrated through Metro Technical Institute, Inc. [MTI] of Oak Park, Michigan from August 1998 through October 16, 2002, which resulted in the United States Department of Education's loss of over \$533,000, announced United States Attorney Stephen M. Murphy.

Emannual Njoku, age 51, of Oak Park, Michigan, George Zimmerman, age 46, of Columbus Ohio, and Charles Nnaji, age 44, of Detroit, Michigan were sentenced by United States District Court Judge Marianne O. Battani in Detroit, Michigan. The defendants had previously pleaded guilty to the charges.

Mr. Njoku, vice president and co-owner of MTI, was sentenced on July 11, 2007 to serve one year and one day in the custody of the Bureau of Prisons, to be followed by two

years on supervised release, and ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$533,344 on the felony charge of conspiracy to defraud the United States. Mr. Zimmerman, the executive director at MTI, was sentenced on July 12, 2007 to serve three years probation and to pay restitution in the amount of \$557,467.00. Mr. Nnaji, the director of education at MTI, was sentenced on the same date to serve 2 years probation, with the first 90 days in custody, and to pay restitution of \$5,101.00 on a misdemeanor charge of aiding and abetting the obtaining of Title IV funds (student financial aid) by fraud.

United States Attorney Murphy stated, "Instead of providing educational opportunities for students, these defendants took advantage of the system to defraud the Department of Education. In a time when many American families look to the federal government for educational assistance, we will aggressively pursue fraud that undermines and drains funds from that program."

The information presented to the court at the time of the guilty pleas and sentencing showed that the defendants, working together and with other employees of MTI, executed a scheme to defraud the Department of Education by obtaining money for MTI students who were known to be ineligible either because they did not attend classes or did not possess high school diplomas, GED's or take and pass ABT's, and by failing to refund those moneys to the Department of Education. Part of the scheme to defraud also involved creating false documentation for student files to make it look as though students were qualified for federal financial aid so as to hide the scheme from potential auditors and inspectors acting on behalf of the Department of Education.

As a result of the scheme, MTI received over \$533,000 in funds from or guaranteed by the Department of Education to which it was not entitled because of the students' ineligibility.

These sentencings bring to five the number of individuals who have been charged, convicted and sentenced for offenses arising from this scheme. On April 19, 2007, Judge Battani sentenced Sylvia Copeland and Patricia Cole, two MTI administrative employees, to serve 2 years probation and ordered them to pay restitution after pleading guilty to charges arising from their role in the scheme.

The case against MTI's owner and CEO, Goddey Otagba, is still pending. Mr. Otagba is believed to have fled the country for his native Nigeria. The Court has issued a warrant for his

arrest.